(b) The proposals submitted by Government of Karnataka for setting up of Agri Export Zones (AEZs) are yet to be approved.

(c) An action plan to revitalize the AEZs based on the findings of a performance evaluation review has been considered in consultation with the concerned State Governments. One of the guidelines under the plan is a self-imposed embargo on creation of new AEZs unless there are strong and'compelling reasons. Setting up of the new AEZs will be considered after a review by the State Government of their proposals in the light of the guidelines.

Increase in exports

*472. SHRI DARA SINGH:
SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that exports from India are likely to exceed $ 100 billion during the fiscal 2005-06 as it continued to register double-digit growth at about 20 per cent;

(b) if so, what has been its growth during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) what new initiatives Government have taken to actively engage State Governments in promoting India's foreign trade besides a series of new measures to simplify procedures and enhance competitiveness of exports; and

(d) the target set for 2005-06 and 2006-07?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Total exports of about US$101 billion were achieved during 2005-06 against a target of US $ 92 billion fixed for the year; recording a growth of about 25 per cent over the previous year.

(b) The export growth during the last three years is:

	Achievement	Growth Rate
2003-04	US $ 64 billion	21%
2004-05	US $ 81 billion	27%
2005-06(P)	US$101 billion	25%

(P) Provisional

(c) An Inter-State Trade Council has been established, with the objective of recommending measures to provide a trade-enabling environment in the States and to create a framework for making States partners in India's international trade and export effort. In order to encourage State Governments to actively participate in promoting exports, various schemes have been formulated. Under the ASIDE Scheme, Department of Commerce makes allocation of funds to the States on the twin criteria of gross exports and the rate of growth of exports. The States are required to utilize this amount of developing infrastructure such as roads connecting production centres with the ports, setting up of Inland Container Depots (ICDs) and other developmental activities as mentioned in the Foreign Trade Policy. Financial assistance is also available for medium term export promotion efforts to the agencies of the State Governments under the Market Access initiative (MAI) Scheme. In addition, selected towns producing goods of Rs. 1000 crores and more in any sector (other than Handloom, Handicraft, Agriculture and Fisheries Sector for which the threshold limit is only Rs. 250 crore), are entitled for funds under both ASIDE as well as MAI Schemes, and the common service providers in these areas are entitled for the facility of the EPCG Scheme.

(d) An export target of US $ 92 billion was fixed for the year 2005-06. A target of US $ 120 billion has been set for 2006-07.

Development of textile and apparel production centres

*473. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to develop 25 textile and apparel production centres in the country;

(b) if so, by when these centres would be built and the locations thereof;

(c) what would be the functions of these centres;

(d) whether it is a fact that Government propose to merge the two existing schemes, Textile Centres Infrastructure Development Scheme (TCIDS) and Apparel Parks for Exports (APE); and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?